Precarious responsibility

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Cover Page Footnote

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Precarious Responsibility: Teaching with Feminist Politics in the Marketized University

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Abstract: One of the most pressing characteristics of the neoliberal restructuring of academia, together with increased managerialism, performativity measures, and a "customer service" approach, is the casualization or precarization of academic work. Casualization entails a fragmentation of academic work, where academics are forced to move between workplaces on hourly-paid and fixed-term contracts, often doing their job without access to resources such as an office, training, or paid research time. While a number of feminist scholars have investigated the ways in which feminist academics negotiate the ever-increasing mechanisms of individualization, ranking, and auditing of their work, this article focuses on the precarious pedagogies of casualized feminist scholars. Recounting experiences of challenging the hierarchical hegemony of the university, and its white male Euro- and US-centric focus, the article maps attempts to affect the teaching and learning process, while highlighting the precarious but still privileged position of casualized feminist scholars in higher education. Delineating some of the difficulties of teaching with a feminist politics of responsibility in the marketized university, this article suggests possibilities for resistance.

Keywords: feminism, pedagogy, neoliberalism, marketization, casualization, higher education, precarity, gender, race, intersectionality

While the marketization of higher education in the UK has been ongoing since the 1980s, or even the decade before, involving increased reliance on performativity measures for staff and the introduction of tuition fees, this process has recently been intensified using an ideological "austerity" narrative.[1] As Stefan Collini asserts, with these recent changes, higher education has come to be described not as "a public good, articulated through educational judgment and largely financed by public funds" but rather as "a lightly regulated market in which consumer demand, in the form of student choice, is sovereign in determining what is offered by service providers" (2010). Scholars such as Rosalind Gill have highlighted the strain on academic staff (termed "faculty" in the US), related to constant monitoring and increased workloads, connected with changes including "the importing of corporate models of management into university life; the reformulation of the very nature of education in instrumental terms connected to business and the economy; the transformation of students into 'consumers'; and the degradation of pay and working conditions for academics, as well as the increasing casualization of employment" (2010, 230–1).[2] The marketized university's increased reliance on performativity measures and its "customer service" approach to education change what it means to work and study in higher education institutions, strengthening and increasing their already existing hierarchies and inequalities. Additionally, with the contemporary university's focus on profitability and employability, feminist scholarship and teaching—which often offer uncomfortable or troublesome questions and knowledges—might be overlooked in favor of less complex viewpoints that are more easily accountable in terms of economic value.

One of the most pressing characteristics of the neoliberal restructuring of academia is the casualization or precarization of academic work, that is to say, the favoring of insecure hourly-paid or fixed-term contracts over more secure employment. While feminist scholars and educators have highlighted marketization's damaging effects on feminist scholarship and in the context of gendered and/or racialized struggles within academia (Acker and Armenti 2004; Gill 2010; Reay 2012; Phiri 2015; Pereira 2017), with some feminists calling for "slow scholarship" and more collaborative approaches in reaction (Mountz et al. 2015; The Res-Sisters 2016), not as much attention has been paid to the effects of casualization on feminist scholarship and teaching in UK higher education. Rather than focusing on the ways in which feminist academics negotiate the ever-increasing "mechanisms of ranking and rating, structures of auditing and quality control, and logics of individualization and metricization" (Liinason and Grenz 2015), this article shifts the focus to the precarious pedagogies of casualized (termed "adjunct" in the US) feminist scholars, focusing on a UK context. It recounts experiences of teaching with feminist politics while in insecure employment—as an hourly-paid and fixed-term teacher and researcher—at a research-intensive UK university. While the classroom examples are taken from the author's field of English literature, they identify broader structural problems that affect precariously employed educators across disciplines, problems such as a lack of control over teaching material and a fear of speaking out.

Configured through a feminist politics of responsibility, the feminist classroom becomes a space in which to highlight and question structures of privilege and oppression in academia and beyond. Responsibility has long been a pivotal notion in education, one that brings affective relations into the foreground and frames teaching as a political and ethical practice (McLeod 2017). Responsibility here infers a "politics of accountability" (hooks 2013), where the "more expansive concept" of accountability "opens a field of possibility" that moves beyond the reductive binary of victim/oppressor to a more pluralistic understanding of our participation in social structures (hooks 2013, 30). A feminist politics of responsibility that encircles accountability necessarily recognizes that—in this context, in our roles as feminist educators—we can simultaneously enact processes ranging from resistance and reimagining to complicity and reproduction of the systems we inhabit. Mapping some of the challenges faced by casualized feminist educators and scholars in the contemporary university, the article suggests some possibilities for resistance.

Precarity in a Place of Privilege

Casualization in higher education entails a fragmentation of academic work, where academics are forced to move between workplaces on hourly-paid and fixed-term contracts, often doing their job without access to basic resources such as an office or printing facilities, and—like colleagues on permanent (termed "tenure-track" and "tenured" in the US) contracts—doing many hours of unpaid work marking, communicating with students, and preparing lectures and seminars. Although most studies of academic casualization have been conducted in the US and Australia, where this trend has been evident for much longer, similar processes take place in the UK and in other European countries (Bryson and Barnes 2000; Tight 2000; Bryson 2013; Lopes and Dewan 2015). As recent reports from the UK further and higher education trade union, University and College Union (UCU), detail, 54 percent of all academic staff in the UK are employed on insecure contracts (University and College Union 2016). Many of these academics are employed by the hour, constantly moving between three or four workplaces to make ends meet, and they are often on sessional teaching-only contracts with little or no career progression, stuck on the lowest academic pay grade and with no paid annual leave.[3]

The short-term and discontinuous nature of many teaching-only contracts, which often only cover term time, means that numerous casualized staff struggle to pay their rent outside of teaching time, and also to make permanent living arrangements, as they might have to move to another city or country for work. A 2015 survey of staff on insecure contracts carried out by UCU reveals significant numbers of them struggling to get by: 17 percent say that they struggle to pay for food, 34 percent that they struggle to pay rent or mortgage, and 36 percent that they struggle to pay household bills like fuel, electricity, water, and repairs. One respondent states: "I especially dread the summer and Easter periods as I have no idea how I will pay the rent" (University and College Union 2015). Higher education has become one among many other sectors in which for a particular group of workers "insecurity in work has become the norm" (Scott 2017, 83), causing various types of work-based harm. Indeed, UK universities and colleges are twice as likely to use zero-hour contracts—that is to say, hourly contracts with no guaranteed minimum hours of work and pay—than other workplaces, and this is an increasing trend (University and College Union 2013; Chakrabortty and Weale 2016).[4]

While employers maintain that insecure contracts are needed to maintain "flexibility" (as in making staff easier to "hire and fire"), colleagues on insecure contracts risk their health and well-being, as well as their financial situation. As studies of casualized workers show, the emotional impact of job insecurity and exploitation entails stress and constant worrying about the future (Reevy and Deason 2014; Lopes and Dewan 2015). A respondent in a 2015 study details the health consequences of teaching at multiple universities: "I used to have four briefcases. One was a Monday briefcase, one was a Tuesday briefcase … I actually got really despondent about it, because I did it for a year solid and almost had a nervous breakdown" (Lopes and Dewan 2015, 36). In the same study, some respondents "talked about being close to 'breaking point,'" while another respondent states that "I've reached the stage where I'm thinking I don't even know if I can do this any more, I really don't" (Lopes and Dewan 2015, 34–5). Indeed, it seems the longer one works in a precarious situation, the higher is the risk of disengagement and burnout (Chen and Lopes 2015). Other interviewees mention anxiety and negative thoughts of the future as constant companions. In Aretha Phiri's (2015) interview with a group of casualized feminist scholars, one young woman "joked that everyone she knows in academia has 'anxiety or depression'" (21). In a more recent study, one interviewee describes waiting for their contract to be renewed as feeling "very despondent … paralysed, helpless, powerless … immobile, like inertia … I can't make any plans for next week like let alone next year because I don't know if you're going to need me to work next week or not" (Murray 2018, 168). As noted by another respondent in the same study, the tiredness around being overworked often turns into fear when in a precarious position: "I feel fear in academia constantly, most of it having to do with my livelihood" (Murray 2018, 179). While exhaustion and overwork affect also permanent or tenure-track colleagues, possibly to an even further extent due to contractual and added administrative commitments, this constant fear or worrying about work engagements seems characteristic of precarious employment.

Before exploring the deleterious impact of casualization on feminist pedagogies, the privileged position that academics occupy—including those employed on precarious contracts—in the UK and beyond must be acknowledged. Although the experience of working within UK universities does not equal certain romantic representations of academia as a sacred space of intellectual integrity and freedom, untouched by material circumstances and capitalist logic, there is no doubt that teaching and researching in higher education entails a position of privilege. Higher education is traditionally a well-paid profession in the UK, with an academic's hourly rate of pay (for their paid work at least—like teachers elsewhere, most academics work many hours unpaid) currently around double the national minimum wage. The position that the author of

this article occupies within the university has been made accessible to her as a middle-class white woman raised in a country where education on all levels is free and provided or subsidized by the state. As a result, the author has benefited from intersecting privileges that facilitated her access to educational institutions—institutions that are out of reach for a great number of people. These conditions have also led the author to a number of precarious positions at universities in the UK, one of them at a Russell Group university, an institutional affiliation that comes with its own set of unique privileges.[5] Attempting to realize a feminist politics of responsibility requires working within this position of privilege while actively resisting the forces that further marginalize the work and experiences of many members of already-marginalized groups in UK higher education. Even when the agency of precariously employed staff is circumvented, we are accountable—responsible—for doing what we can to enact change.

Precarious Pedagogies

The stress and ever-increasing workloads in marketized universities are detrimental not only to the well-being of staff, permanent and casualized alike, but also to pedagogic practice. Natalie Fenton describes the "demoralisation, demotivation and stagnation" that market principles cause in teaching, when teaching is crammed into every available hour "to maximise space utilisation and student turnover" (2011, 105). The quality of education is bound to decline when marketization forces reduce levels of spending per student, which means less contact time with staff, heavier workloads, larger teaching groups, more students working in term time, a growing commodification and instrumental view of degrees, and an increasing resort to casualized teaching staff (Brown and Carasso 2013, 145). For those in insecure employment, the added anxiety and stress produce far-from-ideal learning conditions for students. Despite the unpaid hours spent by casualized staff trying to protect their students from any potential negative impact, contractual situations necessarily affect pedagogical practices.

While precarious work conditions impact on staff well-being and teaching practice, for feminist educators, the added "troublesome" nature of feminist, antiracist, and other antioppressive pedagogies add a further layer of complexity. Feminist and antiracist pedagogies are often seen as troublesome, sometimes as divisive, or even as creating problems. As Sara Ahmed notes, "[e]ven to describe something as sexist and racist here and now can get you into trouble" (2017, 6); by bringing up examples of injustice, one is perceived as being the cause of that injustice (Ahmed 2012). In a marketized university that favors quick and economically "rational" solutions, feminist pedagogies and epistemologies which question perceived truths may be at risk. As Anna Feigenbaum points out, the marketization of higher education makes it increasingly difficult for teachers to foster feminist and antiracist perspectives: "Competition, self-sufficiency and strident individualism—which are both the symptoms and disease of neoliberalism—appear entirely at odds with the overthrow of power relations" (2007, 337). Can an education based on feminist and antiracist pedagogies overturn existing hierarchies in institutions built on exclusion? It seems difficult to find radical ways of teaching and learning in, against, and beyond the marketized university. With no or limited paid time for preparation, feminist pedagogies are often overlooked since they are predominantly student-centered and problem-focused, and therefore labor-intensive, which puts further demands on educators.

While teaching with feminist politics or raising concerns about injustices in one's institution might make one stand out as a troublemaker, the extent of this categorizing is not only gendered but also racialized. Processes of exclusion as well as inclusion are bound up in the dynamics of gender, race, and class, and often take place silently. A 2016 statistical report revealed that almost 70 percent of UK university professors and

senior managers are white men (Kate Williams 2016).[6] Within these structures of institutional racism and institutional whiteness, white feminists remain in a privileged position to criticize colleagues and structures while feminists of color are often seen as troubling by their mere presence (Gusa 2010; Ahmed 2012; Phiri 2015; Murray 2018). Because of unconscious bias and stereotypes, white male staff are considered "objective" in their teaching, while women and racialized staff of all genders are often suspected of bias (Lazos 2012; Tilley and Taylor 2013). In the place of privilege that is higher education, female, nonbinary/genderqueer, and/or racialized students and staff are often erased, or simply "presumed incompetent" (Gutiérrez y Muhs et al. 2012) by colleagues and peers. Despite the narrative of meritocracy and objectivity in academia, the institutional sexism and racism of higher education in the UK undeniably remains alongside inequality, discrimination, and unequal access to resources (Back 2004; Mirza 2009 and 2015; Pilkington 2013).

For feminist educators on insecure contracts, teaching with feminist politics poses specific challenges. In addition to a lack of freedom to create their own courses or plan ahead, due to the precarious nature of their employment, many are afraid of speaking out against injustice or demanding proper pay for their work. With limited opportunities to question course reading lists and structures, as a result of being on fixed-term or hourly contracts and/or teaching other colleagues' courses, feminist rewritings of curricula are not always a possibility. Additionally, early-career and casualized academics find they are expected to, or need to, undertake unpaid roles and responsibilities in order to contribute to the functioning of their department, "develop" their CVs and maintain visibility as a staff member (Acker and Feuerverger 1996; Eve 2012; Cato 2014; Murray, Crowley and Wånggren 2016). For those in precarious positions, disruptive and challenging pedagogies might mean not only removal from academia but possibly—depending on one's immigration status—also from the country. This reality might lead to avoiding or hiding of concerns with regard to gendered or racial injustices in the workplace, or to being more cautious in terms of what and how they teach. In a recent study, one casualized interviewee links this fear of speaking out to their precarious employment: "my fear is that if I'm—if I don't make myself likeable by people in power then—then I'm not employable … it's hard not to see everything that you say and do through the prism of, like, is this going to extend my contract or not, which obviously makes you less likely to either express a genuine emotion in the workplace or, like, speak out about injustices that you see" (Murray 2018, 180). Casualized feminist academics inevitably have to negotiate the responsibility of being a challenging presence and doing feminist politics—a politics that criticizes hierarchical structures and social injustices—while in a precarious situation.

How, then, can casualized feminist educators mediate between course demands to "cover" the requisite white male canon and the responsibility to question and deviate from the established line of enquiry, for example by including more texts by women, nonbinary/genderqueer people, and/or writers of color? How do we as feminist scholars and educators foster a politics of responsibility in our learning and teaching practices, when the values of such a politics go against the marketized university's discourses of efficacy and employability, and when practicing such politics potentially marks us as troublemakers (thus increasing our precarity)? How do we simultaneously work with the fact that students may have other demands on their time, energy, and emotional resources, such as paid labor, caring responsibilities, or health difficulties?[7] How do we reconcile our responsibility to do the work required to include extracurricular materials with the limitations of our role and pay conditions? Considering these questions, the next section describes examples of interrogating curriculum design and classroom strategies in favor of a pedagogy oriented toward an antiracist and feminist politics that also recognizes class oppression and privilege. While casualized staff's lack of control over teaching materials often hinders radical changes of the written curriculum, classroom strategies and the so-called "lived curriculum" become important ways of teaching with feminist politics, alongside collective struggles for better working conditions.

Teaching with Responsibility

Having outlined the effect of marketization forces on working conditions and health of precarious academics, this section considers potential strategies for teaching with a feminist politics of responsibility while in a precarious position. In an increasingly commodified system that transforms education from a public good into a form of private entrepreneurship, a system in which staff and students alike are framed as economic or entrepreneurial subjects (Foucault 2008, 226; Ball 2000; Walker and Nixon 2004), teaching with feminist politics and pedagogies becomes ever more important. Indeed, bell hooks claims that "[t]he classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy" (1994, 12). Teaching, she states, "is that aspect of our work that offers the space for change, invention, spontaneous shifts" (11). Teaching with feminist politics might offer one way of questioning the hierarchies that exist both within and outside of the classroom: the ongoing structural oppression and privileging of individuals and groups due to gender, skin color, class, sexuality, or other categorizations.

Like critical pedagogy, feminist pedagogy concerns both philosophy and praxis, entailing a set of epistemological assumptions, teaching objectives and strategies, approaches to content, classroom practices, and teacher-student relationships, which are grounded in not only critical pedagogical but also feminist theory and work (Crabtree, Sapp, and Licona 2009, 2).[8] While feminist pedagogies look different in different contexts, they are generally characterized by a commitment to social change also beyond the education system, they highlight the validity of personal experience, involve an ethics of care, criticize hierarchies within and beyond the classroom, and focus on the relationship between students and educators (Crabtree, Sapp, and Licona 2009, 4–6). Feminist pedagogy is related to other antioppressive pedagogies such as antiracist, decolonial and transnational pedagogies (De Lissovoy 2010; Kishimoto 2016), and there is a growing body of written work on articulating feminist and such other antioppressive pedagogies. These writings, alongside education networks and working groups, examine the possibilities of negotiating hierarchical power structures and systems through education.[9] In recent years, a more nuanced critical and feminist pedagogy has grown out of black feminist, transnational feminist, and other social justice scholarship, which stresses not one but various multiple intersecting axes of power or lived experience. A black feminist pedagogy (Omolade 1987; Ali 2009), or what might be called more broadly an intersectional feminist pedagogy, stresses the various points of entry into the numerous kinds of oppressions that exist within and beyond the classroom. Practicing an intersectional feminist pedagogy means challenging the various "hegemonic educational practices" which reproduce an "oppressively gendered, classed, racialized, and androcentric social order" (Crabtree, Sapp and Licona 2009, 1). Coupling canon criticism with a responsibility to reaffirm feminist politics within the classroom setting, an intersectional feminist pedagogy thus draws attention to our positions as educators and students within and against institutions governed by the same white supremacist capitalist patriarchal structures (hooks 2000, 4) of society as a whole.

If we contend that teaching indeed harbors one of "the most radical space[s]" for change within academia, educators are required to consider not only what we teach but *how* we teach, to explore potential ways in which pedagogies might challenge current neoliberal narratives and hierarchical structures within the space of the university. However, as noted earlier, specific problems occur for precariously employed staff, especially for those engaged with feminist or other social justice work. Tutors, course organizers, and lecturers on short fixed-term or hourly contracts in the UK organize full courses, teaching on postgraduate as well as undergraduate courses, often without access to an office space in which to fulfill the duties required of them—to prepare for classes, do their marking, or meet students (for examples across the UK, see Academics Anonymous 2015; Hunt 2016). They are often not considered for training or professional

development, or included in department meetings or e-mail lists, and miss out on many new teaching and learning developments or policies. Claire Goldstene (2013) indeed argues that the financial insecurity of casualized staff "shapes their choices both inside and outside of the classroom" and that "[a]nxiety about contract renewal affects the substance of teaching": staff on insecure contracts may make classes less demanding to mitigate low student evaluations, or they may avoid contentious topics or readings. For feminist educators already in a vulnerable position due to the "troublesome" nature of their discipline, precarious employment adds further vulnerability.

Recounting experiences of challenging the hierarchical hegemony of the university, specifically the white male Anglocentric focus of UK universities, below are mapped attempts to affect the process of teaching and learning while negotiating a precarious but still privileged position in higher education. Drawing upon concrete examples of curriculum design and classroom practices, the section delineates some strategies for teaching with a politics of responsibility within the specific confines of precarious employment.

Curriculum and Canon Criticism

One of the problems facing casualized educators is a lack of control over teaching materials. As canon criticism and curriculum change are central to feminist scholarship and teaching, this problem requires due consideration. Feminist scholars have long criticized the normative, patriarchal, and institutionally racist constructions of canonicity, challenging citational practices and questioning who is allowed to speak through the material. Indeed, ever since Virginia Woolf, in *A Room of One's Own* (1929), noted the differing possibilities for male and female artists in a capitalist patriarchal world (a perspective to which Alice Walker, in "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens" [1983], added the struggles of writers of color), canon criticism has been a major tool of feminist criticism. Criticizing and reformulating white male-dominated reading lists has become standard for feminist educators across disciplines, in this way highlighting the politics of representation.

Despite the adoption of Woolf's and other feminist texts on canon criticism across disciplines in UK universities, and moves to create more diverse reading lists in certain fields, feminist educators still come up against colleagues (including some who ascribe to a feminist politics) who teach entire semesters with only one woman included on their reading list, and most certainly with only white authors and theorists. Many colleagues defend their curriculum designs with a determination that the canon is unchangeable, neutral, and "value-free" or that a white male canon is "what the students want." However, as feminist and antiracist critics have long argued, the canon of any scholarly field is a political matter concerning power, authority, and bias, and the continued lack of accountability regarding canon construction injures both scholarship and teaching. The claim to adhere to an intellectual tradition or education as "value-free" has been and "continues to be used to perpetuate unjust social hierarchies" (Harris and González 2012, 5). While the white male Euro- and US-centric canon is "the default setting, what tends to reproduced unless we consciously aim for it not to be reproduced" (Ahmed 2013), an intersectional feminist pedagogy works to displace this notion of the "neutral" category of the canon.

Course curricula and readings—the kinds of texts and problems we ask students to engage with—might thus seem the most obvious way for feminist educators to enact resistance. As Melanie Walker notes, curriculum and pedagogy are "deeply intertwined": "Decisions about what to teach are not separated from how to teach. Thus pedagogy here is not simply the description of a process divorced from the knowledge to be taught and acquired—content shapes form, and form in turn shapes content. Critical pedagogies are then also critical curriculum projects" (2002, 55). By building challenging material for ourselves and our

students to engage with, and breaking down dominant narratives by valuing the voices of those traditionally omitted from reading lists, we might be able to open up spaces of self-reflection and dialogue regarding not only the purpose of education but also a wider need for social justice. As Shaunga Tagore (2011) describes in her poem on feminism in academia, a lack of attention to students' lived realities in reading lists and classroom discussion can silence and ultimately force students (and staff) to leave academia:

> why did you let me through the doors in the first place
> if you were just gonna turn around and force me out?
> …
> some of us need to engage with feminist theory
> so we can ground it in our community activist work
> our creative works
> our personal relationships
> for our families, communities and histories
> for our own fucking deserved peace of minds
> (Tagore 2011, 37, 40)

Such erasures of lived realities in the classroom are often linked to experiences in university halls and on campus, where especially in ancient universities many students "navigate through buildings that are named after men that would have spat in your face" (Mendez-Zamora 2016). For students attempting to make sense of oppression and privilege, and of their own experiences within wider structures, being faced by yet another reading list full of dead white men can silence those voices already marginalized.

Casualized feminist educators across disciplines face similar problems in challenging the ingrained white male canon, as they are not always free to construct their own courses. Not only might they—like colleagues on permanent contracts—meet with resistance from management, colleagues or students, but teaching the texts they would prefer might not be possible. Many casualized academics are given courses to teach that have been constructed by others, often located outside of their areas of expertise. This short-term nature of teaching, which is now commonplace in UK universities, with lectures or courses constantly being taught by new sessional staff, makes it difficult to rework and improve material or rehearse pedagogical concerns. In a 2015 study of casualized staff, one interviewee explains that since they are "'forever giving lectures for the first time, which is not great for students … it's pretty rare that you find yourself in the position in which you can streamline a lecture, you can improve it. Because you're constantly firefighting'" (Lopes and Dewan 2015, 38). Even when managing to change reading lists for a course, these changes are often undone the next semester as the course moves on or reverts to another colleague.

Considering the lack of control over teaching material, and the potential resistance from colleagues or management, how can casualized staff teach with a feminist politics? Examples from the author's recent teaching practice serve to illustrate how this problem might manifest. I recently taught two courses for third-year and fourth-year undergraduate students, one a historically oriented course structured around texts by a well-known late nineteenth-century white male writer, and the other a thematic course on cityscapes and literature stretching across the eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. Both these courses were taken over from colleagues, taught on an hourly-paid basis and without dedicated paid time for restructuring the syllabi, exams, and essay questions, or for meeting with students. While one of the courses was taken over from a colleague on leave, the other course is systematically taught by casualized staff, year after year, which makes pedagogical improvements difficult. This difficulty manifests especially

in terms of canon revision: If one is assigned courses to teach a week before teaching starts, when students will have already acquired the course texts and started reading, making significant changes to the reading list is difficult. Luckily, I was assigned one of the courses not just once but for four consecutive semesters, which made possible a continual reworking of the reading list and refining of discussion questions and pedagogical strategies.

While most of the main primary texts on the two above-described courses had to be kept the same, and the courses' main aims and objectives had to be retained, there was a certain freedom in setting complementary texts. Even within the author's discipline of English literature, with its focus on the history of ideas surrounding literary texts—a focus which lends itself well to problem-centered learning around issues of social justice—reading lists remain overwhelmingly male and white. In previous years, while the critical material on both courses was made up of both male and female authors (the majority white), the readings on the historical course were *all* by white men, literary giants such as Henry James, Oscar Wilde, and Joseph Conrad. The thematic course included one white woman and one Jewish man. Any feminist educator invested in teaching with responsibility could not ignore the politics of representation: clearly, female and nonbinary/genderqueer students and/or students of color might feel alienated in their learning experience when the only voices heard were markedly different from their own. To counteract this, readings were changed as much as possible to include more female literary contemporaries on the historical nineteenth-century course, and a more diverse and questioning teaching environment was encouraged in terms of critical or secondary material: we read authors of color, non-European and non-US authors, and anti-imperialist authors in order to highlight the racist and colonial patterns of some of the texts on the course. For the thematic course, certain books by white male authors were excised (does one really need to read *two* crime novels by the same white male author?) in order to include women's voices and those of writers of color.

The way the material is *framed* is also of import: for both courses, the themes of several weeks of the semester were changed, and accompanied by different discussion questions. Additionally, a mention of the word "race" was sneaked into the course descriptions. Instead of reading nineteenth-century gothic texts through the theme of "consciousness" (as the previous curriculum had suggested), we focused on late nineteenth-century scientific racism, linking white supremacist and imperialist discourses on race with racial inequality in our contemporary society, in this way highlighting the constructed nature of knowledge and the duality of racial oppression and privilege. Instead of devoting one week to "memory" on the same course, we spent the week discussing gender, examining both late nineteenth-century and twenty-first-century debates on gender roles and marriage.

While the specific examples come from the author's field of English literature, they illustrate broader problems concerning the precarious nature of feminist pedagogy within the marketized university. While a feminist rewriting of curricula is often a joy to carry out, and students often appreciate more critical and diverse reading lists, this is time-heavy labor to be carried out in a work environment that demands quick results. When there is a possibility to change the curricula, researching new texts and locating critical material requires a lot of time, and the work is often unpaid. If teaching on a colleague's course, educators carry out this labor-intensive work with the knowledge that the next person teaching the course might undo it by reverting to the original curriculum. Indeed, criticizing curricula—especially when teaching on someone else's course—might label the casualized educator as a troublemaker in the department or university, placing them in a more vulnerable position.

Syllabus Cocreation and Dialogue

Canon criticism creates a space in which teachers and students can explore the gaps and elisions within syllabi, and together identify topics and texts for consideration. As noted earlier, feminist pedagogy requires mutual recognition and engagement between students and teacher; a learning environment based on reciprocity and dialogue. When teaching, there must be "an ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes" (hooks 1994, 8). Directly implicated in feminist pedagogy is thus a requirement of *mutual engagement* between students and teachers, as well as a new formulation of what is meant by *knowledge*: through dialogic learning involving discussions and questioning of perceived truths, knowledge becomes "a field in which we all labor" (hooks 1994, 14). However, structural issues such as a lack of control over teaching materials can impede feminist educators in their attempts to teach with such a feminist politics. While curriculum cocreation with students is gaining wider recognition and acceptance in UK higher education, and has begun to be implemented in a limited way in some undergraduate degree programs (Bovill, Cook-Sather and Felten 2011), the short-term nature of teaching engagements makes this particular pedagogical practice difficult for casualized staff. Considering this limited agency to change or cocreate syllabi, prompting dialogue about the material studied is a useful alternative strategy. Such dialogue can highlight the problematic character of curriculum design, and the pressure to conform to both institutional conceptions of "the canon" of one's discipline and the perceived student demand for the "delivery" of said canon.

In the aforementioned third- and fourth-year English literature courses, teacher and students made sure continually to come back to questions of canon construction, questioning whose voices and experiences we saw reflected in the reading list, and queried why these specific voices were chosen—and, importantly, whose voices were left out. Similarly, when teaching a second-year survey course on English literature, the author made sure to include questions not only of oppression but also of privilege. Why is it that the famous Scottish poet Robert Burns is celebrated today as a writer of freedom for all (although specifically men) and placed on reading lists alongside US figures such as Thomas Paine, who claimed that according to "common sense" we should perceive all "men" as equal, while Burns was in fact enmeshed in a context of slavery and empire, himself on the verge of taking up work in Jamaica (Morris 2015)? And why is it that the first black writer we encounter on the English literature syllabus is a Nigerian author who writes in connection to British colonialism? Is this negligent treatment of different stories something of the past, or is it still structuring our contemporary culture and society, informing our own subjectivities and positions? Asking these questions together with students forces the classroom to become a dialogic space of enquiry and, potentially, a call to action. By adding excerpts from early slave narratives (such as *The History of Mary Prince: A West-Indian Slave* [1831]) to the course reading list, one may juxtapose the egalitarian ideas espoused by Burns and Paine with the reality of slavery in countries that were then British colonies. One particularly fruitful seminar on the thematic course described above involved juxtaposing Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson's adventure novel *Kidnapped* (1886), with its romanticized descriptions of Scottish Jacobites as freedom-fighting gentlemen, with the antislavery work *The Horrors of Slavery* (1824) by Robert Wedderburn, himself the free son of an enslaved African-born woman and a Scottish slave owner of Jacobite descent. Reading Stevenson's and Wedderburn's work alongside the *Scotland Slavery Map* (Nathanael Williams 2016), a twenty-first-century geographical mapping of slave ownership in nineteenth-century Scotland, this exercise opened up discussions regarding privilege, power, and oppression not only in a historical context but also in the contemporary setting in which we are all implicated. Through studying the map, students located houses of former slave owners just a stone's throw from our classroom.

The same second-year survey course described above allowed for a critical examination, using a historical perspective, of contemporary higher education and the injustices therein. When the Browne Review, a key document in the recent years' commodification of UK higher education, came out in October 2010, and amid growing student protests over increased tuition fees, I was teaching Charles Dickens's novel *Hard Times* (1854).[10] Alongside the novel, students were asked to read Stefan Collini's (2010) analysis of the Browne Review and look for any similarities or differences in arguments about the role of education in these texts. The students found remarkable parallels between current neoliberal formulations of education and mid-Victorian debates around the nature of education.[11] The pairing of these texts opened up discussions regarding the political character of language and the purpose of education, questioning who should be able to access education and of what it should consist. It also prompted discussion of government cuts to welfare and the introduction of forced labor through "workfare," which in some ways signals a return to Victorian work practices (Stanley 2011; Lavelle 2017). Some discussions were more in-depth than others, but at least one of the students declared that they "had never thought of education in this way." Together with a recurring questioning of what and whose stories are being told in the course material, specific exercises like these may encourage politicized thinking, on this occasion specifically around the marketized university's quest for quick and easy answers.

While rewriting curricula through replacing texts might not be possible for casualized feminist educators, addressing constructions of canonicity by prompting dialogue about the choice of prescribed texts and their framing is an option. While the above examples of questioning readings come from an English literature classroom, similar strategies can be used across disciplines. Higher education in the UK is still organized around a white Euro- and US-centric perspective: "In History classes the colonisation of India is taught through the lens of the business workings of the British, and the lives of the colonised is [*sic*] rarely mentioned … Philosophy and Religion are drowned by white, largely male thinkers and a Eurocentric perspective" (Hussain 2015). At the author's own institution, students across disciplines are asked to read texts by Scottish Enlightenment philosophers while lecturers ignore the part some of these philosophers played in imperialist projects and in the institution of slavery. However, by building on critical conversations regarding such omissions in canon construction, students and teachers can locate neglected areas and together agree upon how to investigate them.

Lived Curriculum and Student-Centered Learning

While casualized staff cannot always choose their own curricula, they can—to an extent, at least—choose how to work with the material and with students. A key tenet of critical and feminist pedagogy is the understanding of education as part of a larger sociopolitical arena, with the classroom space reproducing or negotiating the same interactions, oppressions, intersections, and transformations of society as a whole. Education thus involves a "struggle over power relations," a central space where power and politics operate in the same asymmetrical patterns as in wider society (Mohanty 1989–90, 184). Not only economic structures but also value systems and subjectivity formations take place in the classroom through teacher and student relations. Unless active interventions occur to structure educational spaces differently, the same hierarchies and oppressions governing society as a whole will be reproduced in the classroom.

When casualized educators cannot reform teaching materials, the so-called "lived curriculum" (as opposed to the "curriculum as plan") presents another possibility to enact a feminist pedagogy. As Susan Tilley and Leanne Taylor (2013, 409) observe, the curriculum is also *lived*: the bodies, ideologies, and beliefs of individuals in the classroom all influence what evolves as the curriculum. Anyone who has taught

the same course several times will know how completely different discussions come about depending on who inhabits the room and how discussions are structured. The "lived curriculum" evolves as educators, students, and texts interact, making visible the role that people play in the formation of knowledge. Ways of exploring the curriculum as "lived" might be through encouraging students to share experiences related to the material in question, to bring in readings of their own, or to discuss the narratives behind canon formation and to highlight the situational or fluid character of knowledge. In addition to the various themes set for every lecture, tutorial, or seminar, one can make sure, through questions and interventions, to address issues of race, gender, class, sexuality, and so on. While this might be a straightforward task in classes on imperialism or colonialism, or class, gender or racial inequality, teaching with feminist politics means also addressing issues of power and language in other themes and trajectories.

There are certain concrete pedagogical tools and strategies, taken from critical and feminist pedagogies, to help foster an educational community. Such strategies involve more student-centered learning as a way of making students part of the teaching and learning process, for example in terms of assessment and feedback, and course planning and realization, which encourages them to think critically about the education process (Silverman and Casazza 2000). One might ask students to bring in questions or to facilitate parts of the discussions, so as to highlight the classroom as a space where everyone is encouraged to participate and where learning is a communal activity. Asking students to formulate their own discussion questions is just one small but useful way of allowing students to gain control over their own learning. While these examples are much easier in seminar-style groups, there are also techniques for student-centered learning in lecture halls (Gillespie, Ashbaugh and DeFiore 2002, 248–50). Specific classroom strategies to encourage engagement include assigning reflective writing assignments around the material in question, or setting up collaborations on the similarities and differences in students' experiences, in order to foster self-reflexive and critical thinking.

Peer learning is another form of student-centered pedagogy that can be used. In addition to classroom teaching, students are asked to meet up in autonomous learning groups or online to discuss the texts and topics of the week, or to prepare material or questions for their peers, in order to participate more fully in the learning process. They may be given projects that involve taking action outside the classroom, to complement in-class work and to encourage linkages between struggles within and beyond the university. Through student-led discussions, reflexive exercises, and projects, students are prompted to take active roles in the knowledge production process, rather than consigning them to the assigned role of "consumer" and the teacher to that of "knowledge provider," roles prompted by the "banking model" of education (Freire 1996; hooks 1994, 2003, 2010) mirrored in contemporary neoliberal rhetoric. Students are here encouraged to engage with each other's ideas first and foremost, with the teacher positioned as facilitator, moderator, and subject expert.

Feminist educators have a crucial role to play in enabling learning through creating a space where students are empowered to participate in the learning process and where they feel safe to question injustices and perceived truths. In addition to creating exercises that invite students to think critically as well as to reveal what they have learned—to "ask good questions, deflect answers, and connect my students in dialogue"—feminist educators also practice the skill of "lifting up and reframing" (Palmer 1998, 133–4) what students are saying. Indeed, a student-centered pedagogy does not diminish the role of the teacher, who provides both the subject expertise and the pedagogical tools that are crucial to students' progress (Northedge 2003; Northedge and McArthur 2009). On the contrary, teachers "guide" the students into academic practice, and are required to intervene and challenge students' perspectives. With their expertise in the subject area,

educators assign specific questions, tasks, or readings, which act not to determine but rather guide students' discussions; in peer learning, this functions as a kind of "scaffolding" (Benson 1997) of the learning process.

Importantly, feminist educators have the responsibility to question and sometimes close down discussions if they cause harm to other students through discriminatory comments or microaggresions connected to race, gender, sexuality, or other social categories. Not only the kinds of questions that teachers pose, but also the ways in which we handle conflict and discriminatory behavior in the classroom, shape the ways in which students learn and how they engage with the material at hand. Students continue to bear witness not only to fellow students making discriminatory assertions in class, without intervention from the teacher, but also to lecturers and tutors engaging in the same behavior. Confronting such discriminatory behavior does not always infer a "shutting down" of differing opinions. Rather, as hooks (1994, 113) notes, conflicts—as long as they are not harmful but handled appropriately—can be used as a catalyst for new thinking and growth. Indeed, such conflicts can become "teachable moments," where a "disruption, a misfiring, a tangent, a digression" are turned into spaces of resistance (Feigenbaum 2007). These teachable moments can occur also outside or on the borders of the classroom itself, through chance encounters with students, or in other work outside educational institutions.

Critical and feminist pedagogies with student-centered learning at their core are labor-intensive, often demanding more time and effort than traditional teaching methods. It takes time to construct, read, and provide feedback to reflexive assignments, to set up projects, and to create useful discussion questions for autonomous learning groups. It is furthermore emotionally draining to confront discriminatory behavior in the classroom, or to comfort students upset by challenging material. Student-centered pedagogies similarly demand more of the students, so when asking students for input, it is important to be mindful of other demands that they have on their time and the financial resources required to undertake additional work. If students are asked to read texts not on their course reading lists, educators need to take into consideration their access to such texts; whether there are sufficient copies in the university library or in open-access format online, or whether reasonably priced editions are available.

Educate, Agitate, Organize

Involving students in one's own research might seem the primary way of linking academic philosophy and practice together; many of us at times share our research expertise through bringing in our own work into the classroom and asking students to suggest new perspectives or criticisms. However, not as many of us make explicit to our students the conditions we are working in, by discussing precarious employment or workloads, in order to place the classroom in a social and economic context. In the UK, recent industrial actions such as strikes (including a public sector strike involving two million workers, and more recently a fourteen-day-long strike over pensions in universities), work-to-rule arrangements, and marking boycotts (see, for example, Milmo et al. 2011; Press Association 2014; Pells 2016) have necessitated some communication about the working conditions of university staff, but this is something we could do even more. Just as educators and researchers support their students in their fight against marketization measures such as rising tuition fees, or in their struggle against gendered or racialized violence on campus, our students also often support us. With the growing student movement in the UK, emerging in 2010 around protests against tuition fees, there has been a radicalization on many campuses, with students campaigning and taking action on matters not only concerning students but also supporting staff in campaigns and actions against privatization and casualization. Indeed, we owe it to our students to keep up the fight, to look for possibilities of rupturing the neoliberal capitalist logic of the marketized university. In order for higher

education to become accessible to more than the richest parts of society, the need remains to abolish tuition fees and to create more scholarships for disadvantaged students.

Adding to labor-intensive teaching methods, feminist educators often make time (unpaid) outside of office hours for individual discussions with students about their writing, giving suggestions on what to improve as well as gaining insight into how they value the assessment. As hooks notes (1994, 21), when encouraging students to take risks and share their experiences in the classroom, educators should also be prepared to show themselves as being vulnerable. Simply making it clear to students that we do this and other work unpaid, and informing them about the scales of increasing workloads and use of precarious contracts, will strengthen the bond between students and educators. These students may take their concerns to their student union, or to other societies, or contribute to a wider discussion regarding structures of privilege and precarity in contemporary society (also beyond academia).

Given the various constraints on casualized staff's ability—due to the short-term and insecure nature of their employment—to rewrite curricula or to challenge injustices in their workplace, sometimes students are able to raise pedagogical issues that we cannot but want to. Across the UK and in other parts of the world, students have started campaigns against sexual harassment on campuses and for more diverse and inclusive teaching, including initiatives to crowdsource literature by marginalized authors to be included on university curricula (The 1752 Group 2018; Students' Union UCL 2014; Salami 2015; Rhoden-Paul 2015; Edinburgh University Students' Association 2018; Project Myopia 2018). Such student initiatives for gender and racial justice should be supported by staff, many of whom are grateful to these activists for raising issues we often either do not feel able to raise or have raised without being listened to. At the author's own university, student initiatives working for a more diverse and inclusive university, with a focus on canon criticism and intersectional perspectives, have found a lack of inclusive curriculum design and teaching practice (Edinburgh University Students' Association 2018). While some universities are adapting to students' and staff members' requests for a more inclusive education (Andrews 2016; Davis 2017; Gopal 2017), in many places campaigns have instead, sadly, been met with hostility or disinterest by a number of colleagues who brush aside students' continued recounting of experiences of discriminatory behavior from peers and teachers. To counteract such hostility, and to include casualized staff in discussions about pedagogy and canon criticism (casualized staff, as noted earlier, are often not included in department meetings or training events), the author together with a colleague organized a workshop on pedagogy and social justice for casualized staff, with representatives from the student initiatives in question attending to share their project. In the case of this specific workshop, casualized participants were paid for their time, a request the organizers were able to make on the back of the student initiative.

Feminist scholars and educators, in addition to speaking to students about our working conditions, must organize collectively, in trade unions or political organizations, if possible, or through other means. Only through collective struggle can we challenge employers and politicians, and demand better working and living conditions. In the UK, trade unions have voiced the growing concerns of precariously employed staff in academia and in other fields of labor. Casualized academic staff are organizing and mobilizing through campaigns and industrial action. The higher education union UCU since 2008 incorporates a specific anticasualization network, campaigning against the use of short-term or unpaid positions and for increased job security (Morgan 2013; Forkert and Lopes 2015). At the author's own institution, due to trade union organizing, the university has been forced not only to acknowledge the overreliance on casualized staff but also to improve working conditions in terms of pay, contractual arrangements, training and resources for these staff (Gallagher 2013). Management often frames the growing workloads and precarious character

of employment in contemporary universities as individual problems requiring individual solutions: time management courses and a more "positive attitude" are suggested in order to consider job insecurity as an "opportunity" offering "flexibility." However, these are not individual but structural problems, which require structural—collective—solutions.

Conclusion: Limits of Responsibility?

The reality of the working conditions of the marketized university, with its ever-increasing workloads, micromanagement, culture of performativity, and insecure employment, often obstructs the time and care we want to commit to our teaching practice. Teaching with a feminist politics of responsibility requires time and puts emotional constraints on the teacher. Not only do student-centered and dialogic exercises such as reflexive writing assignments or out-of-class projects take more time for the teacher to set up, read, and provide feedback to, but pedagogies that question the status quo require extra time for pastoral support and discussion. Some students struggle with material that pushes them beyond their comfort zone, or that is not perceived as "part of the curriculum" (Applebaum 2008; Gillespie, Ashbaugh and DeFiore 2002), while others fear speaking out about injustices in class, afraid that their voices will be silenced. These situations require time and attention, and potentially place both students and teachers in a vulnerable situation.

While the labor-intensive nature of critical and feminist pedagogies concerns all feminist educators, specific challenges face those in precarious employment. Like permanent colleagues, casualized staff have to juggle priorities and set boundaries for when caring for students hinders a caring for oneself, or have to make decisions about how much preparation is enough to do the job. However, in addition to such time constraints, particularly relevant for casualized staff is the pressure to perform "well" for fear of disciplinary consequences (Motta 2013, 95). In a marketized university where metrics—including the use of student evaluations—increasingly govern employment and promotion practices, critical and feminist pedagogies can put casualized staff at risk. Órla Murray (2018) recounts her struggle as a casualized academic to remain "competitive" in the marketized university while simultaneously working against those same structures:

> As a feminist academic, I am constantly trying to work out how to challenge neoliberal, exclusionary practices from within the institution—asking to be paid for the work that I do, working less, taking the weekend off, not sending e-mails at night or at the weekend, challenging the "always on, always more" mentality of academia. However, I am simultaneously also trying to position myself as "competitive" enough to keep the door open to a future in academia, which often means working unpaid, doing more, working weekends, sending emails at anti-social hours. (Murray 2018, 170–1)

Due to the insecure nature of their work, casualized staff are more vulnerable to negative feedback from students and are more at risk when trying to introduce "troublesome" pedagogies. They are also more at risk when demanding pay for work done, or when declining to work unpaid, as they hazard making themselves unpopular among colleagues.[12] Pedagogies and politics that question the status quo might thus involve dangerous practices in neoliberal workplaces, where casualized staff rely on the recommendation of their line manager (supervisor) or on student evaluations for continued work.

The problem remains for casualized and permanent staff alike: with unrealistic workloads, it is difficult to spend the desired time on one's teaching and still maintain one's health. Noting the anxiety and stress with which many of us struggle on a daily basis, we must consider our working conditions when reflecting on the ideals and realities of feminist pedagogy: in contemporary universities, we often do not have the

time and energy to teach as we would wish. We cannot simply "work harder, manage our time better," but must rather make realistic adjustments to our working conditions while simultaneously demanding their improvement (Pereira 2012, 134). Organizing collectively in trade unions and in political associations provides a way to challenge the unrealistic workloads and job insecurity that threaten our health as well as our pedagogies. Alongside collective struggles against the hierarchies implicit in UK higher education, observing a politics of self-care thus becomes an essential component of enacting a feminist politics of responsibility in the university. This politics of self-care refers not only to caring for oneself but necessarily involves a collectively based care for others, both students and colleagues.

One additional point must be stressed: unless accompanied by collective struggles for structural and material change, an intersectional feminist pedagogy can only go so far. There is a real and urgent need for fairer representation; universities must appoint and invest in female and nonbinary/genderqueer staff and students, working-class staff and students, and staff and students of color. Unless we build alliances through an intersectional feminism intent on opposing all ideologies of domination, the "sea of whiteness" (Ahmed 2012, 35) facing students and staff in university meetings and classrooms, on department web pages, and in other settings is unlikely to change. Similarly, in order for higher education to become accessible to more than the richest parts of society, the need remains to abolish tuition fees and to create more scholarships for students. Fair representation and fair working conditions are connected; the current silencing, disempowering, and slow breaking down of a generation of feminist scholars and educators points to a wider problem concerning not merely education but representation, democracy, and freedom of thought. When colleagues are afraid to speak out against injustice in fear of losing their jobs, when they fall ill from overwork or stress, or when they leave the sector in an act of self-preservation, this affects the kinds of knowledge being produced in universities and who is represented among their staff.

The selected examples and strategies detailed in this article, drawn from the author's experiences as a casualized feminist academic and educator in a UK university, are not meant as a solution or an ultimate plan of action—they are a few of many minor examples of ways in which we can teach responsibly, with a feminist politics of accountability, while continuing the wider and collective fight for a university more suited to its purpose. Casualized feminist educators' agency is often circumvented, probably more so than that of permanent colleagues who, while facing many of the same problems and additional ones, do not always struggle with issues such as lack of resources, uncertainty over how to pay one's rent during the holidays, or whether or not one will have a position in a few months' or weeks' time. Casualized staff in universities often juggle several jobs, both within and outside their academic workplaces, in order to cope financially; many are not able to do the unpaid work required in order to foster the critical feminist educational spaces we dream of.

However, we are still in a place of relative privilege, we are still accountable for our actions, and we do have a responsibility—even if it is a precarious one. A student's feedback on one of the courses mentioned above has stayed with the author: Being asked to describe what the student found most valuable about the course, they answered that in addition to the finely crafted reading list they valued the "attention to intersectionality and diversity against all odds." While the student in question probably referred to the white male canon of the subject area as the "odds" against which we struggled, the author would like to think the comment also refers to the odds that feminist educators are all up against in the marketized university—some facing fewer and others facing more obstacles, depending on employment status, gender, skin color, or class—but against which we continue to work.

Notes

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1. The marketization of higher education in the UK has taken place under both Conservative-led and New Labour governments, involving the introduction of research assessment exercises as well as tuition fees. As evidenced in the work of student activists and highlighted in E. P. Thompson's *Warwick University Ltd*, already in the early 1970s there were troubling links between the university and local businesses, compromising the civic duty of higher education and prefiguring current struggles (Thompson 2014). Recently, however, this marketization process has been intensified with the ideological "austerity" narrative that accompanied the financial crisis of 2008 and the global recession. Using the financial crisis as a justification, UK politicians have forced cuts throughout the public sector, and speeded up the implementation of neoliberal structures in higher education. As Akwugo Emejulu and Leah Bassel concur, the transformation of higher education using market principles "is a key transformation facilitated by and as a consequence of the economic crisis" (2013, 4). Higher education has thus been marketized under the guise of "austerity", of "tightening the belts."

2. In the UK, research is structured by neoliberal mechanisms such as the Research Excellence Framework (REF), in which institutions have their research assessed through administrative processes in which books, articles, or projects are termed "outputs." The REF was recently accompanied in England (with implications reaching other parts of the UK) by the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), which in a similar manner focuses on performance metrics to evaluate teaching practices.

3. At the time of writing this article, the author works at two universities on three different contracts, and has colleagues simultaneously working at several universities in different cities while additionally doing work outside of academia.

4. For an explanation of zero-hour contracts, see Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) 2018.

5. The Russell Group is an organization of 24 research-intensive UK universities with strong links to industry. Russell Group universities include both ancient universities, such as the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and former polytechnics, such as the University of Warwick. Undergraduate admission to Russell Group universities is highly competitive, while their reputation for "world-leading" research ensures a strong postgraduate profile; over 60 percent of all doctorate degrees in the UK are awarded by Russell Group universities (The Russell Group 2016).

6. Based on data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency, the report reveals: "Nearly 70 per cent of professors are white men, while just under 22 per cent are white women. Some 7.3 per cent of professors are BME [black and minority ethnic] men, and just 1.9 per cent are BME women. Among university senior managers, 67.5 per cent are white male, 28.3 per cent white female, 3.3 per cent are BME male and only 0.9 per cent BME female" (Kate Williams 2016).

7. According to research carried out by the Sutton Trust, UK graduates now face a student debt burden greater, on average, than their US peers (Viña 2016). Students are thus embarking upon third-level education within a context of looming debt and uncertain employment prospects at the same time as their teachers, and often also administrative and support staff, negotiate heavy workloads and similarly precarious working conditions.

8. Critical or liberatory pedagogy (Freire 1996) focuses on examining and criticizing the existing social structures as well as the socially constructed nature of knowledge. A politicized thinking is encouraged, through dialogic learning and teaching methods in which knowledge is co-constructed by educators and learners. Critical pedagogy has been criticized, however, for focusing on a single kind of oppression—that of class—when questioning systems of domination in education (Weiler 1991).

9. Education networks in the UK, such as the Lincoln Social Science Centre, the Ragged Project, the UK Free University Network, People's Political Economy, and BRE(A)D in Birmingham, organize free education projects that stand as an alternative to the establishment structures of higher education. On feminist and other antioppressive pedagogies, see edited collections such as *Feminisms and Critical Pedagogy* (1992), *The Feminist Teacher Anthology: Pedagogies and Classroom Strategies* (1998), *The Feminist Classroom: Dynamics of Gender, Race and Privilege* (2001, 2nd revised edition), *Twenty-First-Century Feminist Classrooms: Pedagogies of Identity and Difference* (2002), *Feminist Pedagogy: Looking Back to Move Forward* (2009), and work published in *Race Ethnicity and Education* by, among others, Gillespie, Ashbaugh and DeFiore (2002), Solomon et al. (2005), and Applebaum (2008; 2012). bell hooks's Teaching Trilogy (1994; 2003; 2010) is a great resource for feminist educators.

10. The Browne Review, or the *Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance*, was instigated in 2009 by the former Labour government to find new ways to fund higher education, with many of its recommendations carried through by the following, Conservative-led coalition government, using austerity as a legitimating discourse. The Browne Review was followed by the government's later White Paper on higher education (2011), the Green Paper (2015), which claimed that further metricization and market measures would ensure "teaching excellence, social mobility and student choice" (Gov.UK 2015; see also Scott 2015), and the 2016 White Paper (based on the 2015 Green Paper). Education in these documents is linked to market forces rather than considered a vital part of a functioning democracy, and is increasingly regarded as a "private asset" rather than a public good. Through them, students are posited as customers, while staff become service providers.

11. In the twenty-first century, as economic rationality is extended to formerly noneconomic domains, "neoliberalism normatively constructs and interpellates individuals as entrepreneurial actors in every sphere of life" (Brown 2003). Thus all human actions and policies are considered only in terms of profitability, instrumentality, and utility. In *Hard Times*, Dickens criticizes the contemporary utilitarian thought and economic rationalism (as propagated by philosophers Jeremy Bentham and Adam Smith), embodying these values in the character Thomas Gradgrind, in whose school any notion of learning is purely instrumental. Much like a twenty-first-century neoliberal defining education merely in terms of individual students' "employability" and contribution to economic growth, Gradgrind insists that learning should merely concern "Facts," as they are the only useful part of education.

12. One example from the author's teaching demonstrates the difficulty in demanding pay for work done, and how such demands can affect teaching. A few years ago the author coorganized a cross-cultural thematic course on literature and medicine, written from scratch within a feminist political framework and including a variety of perspectives. While it was a fantastic course to teach, once the semester was over, the university refused to pay more than half the contact hours (that is, classroom hours) worked and would give no pay for preparation or assessment. Their "justification" was that previous educators had done the work for only half the pay. As payment is done on an hourly contract (see note 4), it is easy for the employer to withhold pay like this. While persistence and trade union pressure finally produced a financial result, the administration cancelled the course. In this example, a precarious contract situation left the teachers without pay for months, and a simple demand for wages for hours worked resulted in the elimination of a course appreciated by students.

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